

ANNUAL REPORT


OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

TO THE

RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY OF THE
BUCKINGHAM UNION.

1898.



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TO THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF

BUCKINGHAM.

STEEPLE CLAYDON,

28th January, 1899.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In presenting to you my first Report as Medical Officer of Health for the nine months ending December 31st, 1898, allow me to thank you for the support which you have given me in carrying out the duties of my office, and for the courtesy and consideration with which you have received the recommendations which I have brought under your notice for the better sanitation of the District.

*Number of
Meetings
attended.*

During the nine months since my election, I have attended 15 Council Meetings, and 18 Committee Meetings.

*Area and Pop-
ulation of
District.*

The Buckingham Rural District comprises an area of 52,557 acres, and contains an estimated population to the middle of the year 1898 of 8,466, being a decrease of 488 since the census of 1891, when the population was 8,954.

Birth-rate.

The number of births registered during the nine months was 155, being equal to an annual birth-rate of 24·4 per 1,000 living, compared with 29·7 for England and Wales (1897).

Death-rate.

The number of deaths registered during the nine months was 66, being equal to an annual death-rate of 10·4 per 1,000 living. Four deaths, however, were registered in the District of persons not belonging thereto, and two deaths occurred in

the Buckingham Union Workhouse of persons belonging to the District, so that the corrected death-rate is 10·1 per 1,000 living. These figures must be looked upon as satisfactory, the death-rate for Rural England and Wales being for the year 1897 at the rate of 15·8 per 1,000 living.

*Infantile
Mortality.*

The infantile mortality, that is the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age, per 1,000 births registered, was 70·9. As is well-known, this rate is much lower in purely agricultural districts than it is in mining counties or large towns, so that in making a comparison we must take the rate in agricultural counties such as Wilts, Herts, and Dorset, where we find it is 115·3, while the rate for England and Wales (1897), is 156.

*Phthisis
Death-rate.*

There have only been two deaths from phthisis (consumption), equivalent to a phthisis death-rate of ·315 per 1,000, compared with 1·38, the rate for England and Wales.

*Zymotic
Death-rate.*

The Zymotic death-rate is also ·315 per 1,000, compared with 2·15 for England and Wales. While these rates are most encouraging, it may be well to point out that in dealing with the comparatively small population contained in the Buckingham Rural District, a slight increase in the number of deaths would raise the death-rate considerably.

*Zymotic
Diseases.*

The Zymotic death-rate has already been dealt with, and the two deaths which occurred were due to Whooping Cough and Diarrhoea, the Whooping Cough proving fatal in a child 11 months old, and the Diarrhoea in a child of 1 year and 4 months.

Scarlet Fever.

There have been six cases of this disease notified during the nine months, and none of them has proved fatal. Thirteen cases were notified during a similar period in 1897. These cases occurred in no less than four different villages, so that the disease did not show any tendency to spread in an epidemic form. In one case I had to send a notice to one of the patients warning him not to mix with other people until his medical attendant had given him leave to do so.

Diphtheria.

I am very pleased to report that not a single case of this disease has been notified during the nine months. Five cases were notified during a similar period in 1897.

*Enteric
(Typhoid)
Fever.*

Only one case of Enteric (Typhoid) Fever was notified, and it recovered. From a careful examination of the circumstances of the case I came to the conclusion that it was not contracted in this District. Only one case was notified in 1897, which was also imported.

Measles.

This is not a notifiable disease here. An epidemic broke out at Chackmore during last summer, and the school was closed. There were no fatal cases.

*Whooping
Cough.*

One death occurred from this disease, but I have no official knowledge of the number of cases as the disease is not notified.

Erysipelas.

Six cases have been notified without a death, compared with 10 cases during the last nine months of 1897.

*Membraneous
Croup.*

No cases notified.

Small-pox.

No cases notified.

*Infectious
Diseases
Notification
Act.*

There has been a total of 13 cases notified under this Act, of which six have been cases of erysipelas. Twenty-nine cases were notified during a similar period the year before. I give here a table of the diseases notified in the District since the Act came into force in 1890:—

CASES NOTIFIED.

	Scarlet Fever.	Erysipelas.	Diphtheria.	Typhoid.	Membrane- ous Croup.	Typhus.	Small-pox.	Total.
1890	0	6	1	2	0	1	0	10
1891	23	3	2	2	1	1	0	32
1892	16	3	0	5	0	0	0	24
1893	28	6	6	3	0	0	12	55
1894	46	14	11	2	0	0	0	73
1895	17	12	54	9	0	0	0	92
1896	4	17	16	4	1	0	0	42
1897	13	16	6	1	0	0	0	36
1898	8	9	1	1	0	0	0	19

*Systematic
Inspection of
District.*

I have made a systematic inspection of the District, during which I have visited every village in it. The detailed report of this inspection has been printed and laid before you, and many of its recommendations have been carried out, while others are now in hand. Here I may quote from the Local Government Board Memorandum to Medical Officers of Health as to what is meant by a systematic inspection.

*Meaning of
Systematic
Inspection.*

By "Systematic Inspection" are meant inspections independent of such inquiries as, under other articles of the Order, the Medical Officer of Health has to make into particular outbreaks of disease, or into unwholesome conditions to which his attention may have been specially called by complaint or otherwise, and such inspections will include the house-to-house inspections, which may be necessary in particular localities.

These inspections very often forestall complaints which may be made by private individuals or public bodies. As an instance of the former, the proposed diversion of the sewer at Twyford may be cited, and of the latter the complaint of the Chackmore Parish Council regarding the fouling of the water supply.

Tuberculosis.

Koch, by his great discovery of the Tubercle Bacillus in 1882, proved that it was the cause of Tuberculosis in its various forms, such as Pulmonary Tuberculosis or Phthisis (consumption of the lungs), Tabes Mesenterica (consumption of the bowels), Tubercular Meningitis (water in the head), &c., &c. When we consider that Tuberculosis in its various forms causes about 60,000 deaths in England and Wales every year, we are brought face to face with a tremendous loss of life, which is in a great measure preventable. The disease is spread by the specific infection of the Tubercle Bacillus from one person to another, or from animal to man, and wherever you have Tuberculosis in its various forms there you have Tubercle Bacillus, or conversely, if there were no Tubercle Bacillus there would be no Tuberculosis. Some persons show a predisposition to its attacks,

Tuberculosis
(continued).

and the disease was therefore looked upon as hereditary, but it is now proved that while the predisposition to be attacked by Tuberculosis is hereditary the disease itself is not.

By improved sanitation the deaths from Tuberculosis have been reduced about 40 per cent. during the last 40 or 50 years, but much still remains to be done. Direct sunlight, and in a less degree ordinary daylight are most destructive to the Bacillus. The principal way by which consumption is spread is by means of the inhalation into healthy lungs of the dried expectoration or spittle of those affected by the disease. This expectoration is generally full of the Bacillus, and there is a great deal too much indiscriminate spitting by those affected by the disease. Means are now being taken to prevent this by warning the public as to this dangerous habit. About 7,000 children die annually in England and Wales from *Tabes Mesenterica* (consumption of the bowels), and this disease is caused in the great majority of cases by drinking milk containing tuberculous matter; while all other forms of tuberculosis have decreased, this form has not only shown no diminution, but has actually increased in children under one year of age, and this is due to the number of milking cows affected with tuberculous udders. I am glad to say that there has not been a single case of death from *Tabes Mesenterica* registered in your District during the last nine months of 1898, and we may infer from this fact that the milking cows of the District are not affected with tuberculous udders to any serious extent. You have seen fit to refuse to put into action the Dairies and Cowsheds Order. My own opinion on the matter is that the Order should be made compulsory by the Central Authority, the onus of doing so being taken away from the Local Authority; that all cows with diseased udders or otherwise found dangerous on inspection should be got rid of; and that the owner should be compensated for them. By sterilising or boiling the milk at home, all danger of contracting the disease is removed. Public opinion has lately

Tuberculosis
(continued).

been largely exercised by this matter, and the "National Association for the Prevention of Consumption and other forms of Tuberculosis" has been formed. A meeting was held at Marlborough House, on December 20th, 1898, at the invitation and under the presidency of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, for the purpose of furthering the objects of this Association, and numerous other meetings have been held throughout the country. I ask your Council to help in this matter by having leaflets printed and distributed pointing out the danger of the disease, and giving simple directions regarding the means to be used for its prevention. Also to offer to disinfect free of cost all rooms recently occupied by patients suffering from Tuberculosis, who have died or removed. Notification of the disease has been proposed by some, but is not advocated by the National Association, the Local Government Board, or Sir R. Thorne Thorne, their Medical Officer, and there are grave objections to its being put into force. It is expected that if the objects of the National Association are thoroughly carried out it will be possible in about 30 years to wipe out Tuberculosis from among the diseases affecting the human race. This subject might be treated of at much greater length, but the space at my disposal will not allow me to do so. It is most desirable however, that meat and milk from abroad should be subject to the same restriction and inspection as the home products.

Water
Supplies.

Four water certificates were applied for—two were granted, one was refused, and one is in abeyance. I have visited and taken samples from no less than 36 public supplies in the District, and I have made an extended analysis of them. I have submitted copies of these analyses to your Council. At present there are under consideration three schemes for the purpose of giving the three villages of Twyford, Charndon, and Poundon a pure and sufficient water supply. Twyford is to be supplied by gravitation; Charndon by a windmill and reservoir; and Poundon by gravitation from a well. Estimates of cost have been obtained; the agreements with

the landlords are practically completed, the sources of supply have been found satisfactory, and it only remains to apply for a Local Government Board inquiry for power to borrow the money required. I hope during the coming year to see these supplies completed.

A pump has been erected at Thornborough by the Parish Council where a dipping well existed before, and this is a great improvement. It was recommended in my Special Report.

The pump at Steeple Claydon—the water from which was condemned by me on analysis—has been thoroughly overhauled, the well cemented and backed with clay puddle, and a York stone put over the top instead of the wooden covering which was there previously.

At Edgcott the landlord has kindly extended the water supply by pipe to the other end of the village, and erected an anti-freezing stand-pipe at his own expense.

Sewerage.

A main sewer has at last been completed at Water Stratford, the matter having been before your Council for some years, and most of the connections with the sewer have been already made.

About 45 yards of defective sewer have been made good at Shalstone.

At Akeley a length of sewer has been laid connecting two sewers already in existence. At Steeple Claydon the main sewer has been extended about 130 yards up Bull Lane so as to allow of 15 houses being connected with it. Some of the connections have been made, and others are now in hand. Ninety yards of sewer were put down at Tingewick, and 44 yards at Padbury. All these sewers have been constructed with glazed and socketted pipes, jointed in cement and smoke tested.

Summonses.

Three were issued in one case of overcrowding at Steeple Claydon, but owing to the shifting of the tenancy we were not able to obtain an abatement of the nuisance until the

landlord evicted the tenant. A summons was also taken out against the Great Central Railway for causing the station master's house at Calvert to be occupied without having previously obtained a water certificate for it, and a conviction obtained.

*Treatment of
Sewage.*

Two villages of the District (Marsh Gibbon and Edgcott) being situated within the watershed of the River Thames, the Thames Conservancy Board called upon your Council to treat the sewage of these villages so as to prevent it polluting the Thames or its tributaries. The soil being heavy clay, and therefore unsuitable for treating the sewage by broad irrigation or intermittent downward filtration, I proposed that tanks and coke breeze filters should be constructed for that purpose. This has been done, and although there were difficulties owing to the very flat character of the country, the tanks are now almost completed and will, I expect, soon be in working order, and able to deal in a satisfactory manner with the sewage passing through them.

Urban Powers.

Your Council has very wisely applied for, and obtained, Urban Powers, and these powers are now in force in your district. They will be of great advantage in ensuring that all new houses shall be satisfactorily constructed from a sanitary point of view.

*Isolation
Hospital.*

You will, doubtless, notice that at the bottom of Form B there is a query as to the name of the Isolation Hospital used by the sick of the District, and I have had to state that there is no Isolation Hospital in the District, but that a tent is used when necessary. This is a question which will probably be forced upon your attention in the near future, and possibly would have been before now if the Buckinghamshire County Council had possessed a Medical Officer of Health. The popular alternative to vaccination is isolation, so that it is now more necessary than ever to supply ample isolation accommodation when so many are refusing vaccination.

Disinfection.

In connection with this subject comes also the fact that in this District there are no means of ~~a~~ disinfection by moist heat or steam, applied by means of a properly constructed disinfecting chamber, which is the only satisfactory means of disinfecting bulky articles of clothing and bedding.

In conclusion, I beg to acknowledge the valuable help given me by Mr. Varney, your Sanitary Inspector, and beg to append a detailed list of the work done by both of us during the past year.

I have the honour to be,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

PHILIP L. BENSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

SUMMARY OF NUISANCES ABATED DURING THE YEAR 1898.

Number of Houses, Places, or Premises Inspected	...	540
Number of Notices on hand 31st December, 1897	...	4
Number of Notices served ... ..	...	19
Complied with ... ..	...	16
Leaving on books, 31st December, 1898	...	7
Letters written relative to Nuisances	...	521
Slaughter-houses Inspected	...	1
		<hr/>
Houses repaired ... ..	...	11
,, Lime-washed and Cleansed...	...	18
,, supplied with Disinfectants	...	10
,, Over-crowded, ... ..	...	3
Closets improved or converted to dry earth ones	...	9
Vault Closets cleaned out ... ..	...	7
Privies re-placed with Water Closets	...	3
Ashpits repaired ... ..	...	6
New Houses built ... ..	...	8
Drains laid to Houses	...	39
,, Repaired ... ..	...	72
,, Trapped ... ..	...	50
Sewage filtering tanks constructed	...	3
Ditches cleaned out ... ..	...	24
Sewers ventilated ... ..	...	8
Water Inlets into Sewers trapped	...	6
Foul Pigwash removed ... ..	...	3
Manure, and other Refuse removed	...	27
Pigsties drained ... ..	...	3
Public Wells sunk ... ..	...	4
,, ,, cleansed ... ..	...	2
Pumps fitted to Wells	...	1
,, repaired or altered	...	10
Wells repaired ... ..	...	2
,, ventilated ... ..	...	4

SUMMARY OF NUISANCES ABATED, &c. (*continued*).

Water laid on to Houses	...	...	...	...	...	5
Public Water Supplies repaired	...	...	...	...	3	
New Public Water Supply by Standpipe	...	...	...	...	1	
Public Water Supplies Analysed	...	...	...	...	36	
Sewage Ponds cleaned out	...	...	...	...	4	
Persons summoned before the Magistrates				...	3	
Sewers repaired	...	...	...	...	6	
New Main Sewer for village	...	...	...	...	1	
Sewers partly taken up and relaid	...	...	...	...	4	
New extension of Sewers	...	...	...	...	3	
						399

(A) TABLE OF DEATHS during 9 months, April-December, 1898, in the Buckingham Rural District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.										MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																							
NAMES OF LOCALITIES.	15 and under 25	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	FEVERS.										Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.	Cholera.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Cancer.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	TOTAL.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										

The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.

[illegible]

(B) TABLE OF POPULATION, BIRTHS, and of NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the 9 months, April-December, 1898, in the Buckingham Rural District; classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY, COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.										
	Last Census	Estimated to middle of 1898.			Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	FEVERS.						
									Typhus.	Enteric or Typhoid.	Continued.	Relapsing.	Puerperal.		
Registration Sub-district of BUCKINGHAM (Rural)	3386	3217	58	Under 5 5 upwrds	3					1					1
Registration Sub-district of TINGEWICK ...	4821	4565	86	Under 5 5 upwrds	1										5
BIDDLESDEN, TURWES- TON, and WESTBURY (Brackley Union).....	747	684	11	Under 5 5 upwrds	2										
TOTALS.....	8954	8466	155	Under 5 5 upwrds	3 3					1					6

Notification of Infectious Disease has been compulsory in the District since January 1st, 1890. There is no Isolation Hospital. A tent is used when necessary.

